PUBLIC WORKS

EVERETT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Pubic Works Staff
FROM: Dave Davis
DATE: February 6, 2014
RE: The Public Works Department's Idling Policy

Purpose:

To require Public Works Department employees to limit or eliminate the idling of Public Works vehicles and equipment to reduce the cost of City operations and to reduce exhaust emissions.

Policy:

It is the policy of the Public Works Department to continually improve the efficient use of its vehicle fuels in an effort to reduce operating costs and emissions. Accordingly, employees shall not unnecessarily idle the department's vehicles and motorized equipment, and shall adhere to the following operational rules:

1. The idling of vehicles or equipment is limited to a maximum of one (1) minute for gas engines and three (3) minutes for diesel engines when the ambient temperature is above 32 degrees F.

2. A five (5) minute maximum idle time limit is allowed for any engine type when ambient temperature is at or below 32 degrees F or if frost is present on vehicle windows.

3. Vehicles must not be left idling when the operator is out of the vehicle (with the exceptions listed below) per RCW 46.61.600, which reads, in part: "No person driving or in charge of a motor vehicle shall permit it to stand unattended without first stopping the engine..."

4. For the health and safety of Public Works crews, supervisors may authorize instances in which idling will be permitted beyond these limitations, such as for protection from the elements or for the use of the vehicle safety features (e.g., warning lights, or air conditioning in street sweepers to keep dust out of the cab).

5. Equipment idling to accumulate operational hours is not allowed.

Exceptions:

Due to the emergency nature of some City operations, the following are exceptions to the idling policy stated above:

- Response vehicles when responding to an emergency.
- The vehicle is forced to remain motionless because of traffic conditions or mechanical difficulties.
- Vehicles or equipment that must be kept running to power onboard electrical equipment (e.g., emergency lights, radar, computers, etc.).

Non-Compliance:

This departmental policy is effective as of March 15, 2014. Thereafter employees must comply with this policy or they may be subject to employee discipline.

Background Information Regarding Idling

- With computer-controlled, fuel-injected gas engines, no more than 30 seconds of idling is needed before driving away. The best and fastest way to warm up a vehicle is to drive it. Driving a vehicle cuts warm up time in half.
- To warm up a diesel engine, start it and do your CDL walk around, then drive it. Three minutes is long enough to warm up our diesel vehicles, including backhoes or similar equipment.
- In winter conditions, emissions from an idling vehicle are more than double the normal level after a cold start. It is important to drive away as soon as possible after a cold start, while avoiding high speeds and rapid acceleration for the first five miles of operation.
- Warming up a vehicle means more than warming the engine. The tires, transmission, wheel bearings, and other moving parts need to be warmed up too.
- Cool down for our diesel engines is three to no more than five minutes.
- Ten seconds of idling can use up more fuel than restarting the engine. If you are stopped for more than approximately30 seconds in neutral or park, - turn off the engine.
- Restarting a vehicle has little impact on the engine components such as the battery and starter motor.
- Idling gets us nowhere (zero mpg) and it can be costly. Excessive idling wastes an enormous amount of fuel and money and generates needless greenhouse gas emissions.
- Vehicle exhaust is the leading source of toxic air pollution in Washington State.
- Idling a diesel engine for one hour a day wastes about $588 in fuel a month (at $3.40/gal) or $7,000 a year for each vehicle. Gasoline engines waste a similar amount of fuel and money, about 80% of a diesel. The Public Works Department spent a total of $1.7M for gas and diesel fuel in 2012, or about 500,000 gallons.
- Try to keep rolling in traffic. It can take approximately20% more fuel to accelerate from a full stop than from 5 MPH. Plan ahead and look down the road to anticipate stops when you can safely. Ease into accelerations and brake smoothly, especially around corners.
- Per RCW 46.61.600 and WAC 478-116-2811, no vehicle operator in charge of a motor vehicle shall permit it to stand unattended without first stopping the engine, locking the ignition, removing the key, and setting the parking brake.